



OUR GOD IS A SOVEREIGN GOD

We have all heard the term and attribute concerning our God as being a "sovereign God." What does that mean? Well, it seems as if it has many different meanings to many different people. However, the fact is that there is only one God and therefore there can only be one attribute to this one God when it comes to His "sovereignty."

First of all let's give a definition to the term "sovereign." The etymology of the word "sovereign" is that it stems from the Latin word "*super*" which simply means "above." As a noun (a person, place or thing), the term "sovereign" refers to a supreme ruler - either a king or queen. That person is the supreme and final authority over a nation or kingdom. As an adjective (a word that describes a noun) it describes that person as having and possessing supreme and final authority within their realm. It includes the ability of that ruler to rule and reign with ultimate power. They possess the ability to perform and put into action their edicts, laws and commands. It infers that this supreme ruler acts independently **without** outside influence or bias from or towards anyone or anything.

Having the above definition, when referring to our God found in His Holy Word, we see that it means that God is in complete control of all things and that everything and anything that takes place never, never, NEVER!!!; takes Him by surprise. Everything, everything, EVERYTHING!!!; happens by and through His will and for His purposes and His purposes, only. According to our definition, a sovereign ruler acts and performs his or her purposes without any influences from outside sources. The ruler acts and performs according to its will and its will alone. This also is true concerning Yahweh God's sovereignty. He acts, performs, allows every single event, situation and circumstance for the express reason of accomplishing His, and only His, will, purpose and plan in bringing forth His Kingdom.

Unfortunately, over the course of history, as well as in Church history, we have had some very bad role models of what a sovereign ruler is to be. The term "sovereign" ruler has become synonymous with corruption, terror and cruelty. Many men, women and religious leaders have taken claim to being "sovereign" within their realm of rule and have used it for their own selfish and wicked motives. This we understand happens because of the sinful and corrupt nature of mankind because of the "fall" that occurred back in Eden. The common phrase we hear concerning this is one by the English Catholic historian, politician, and writer, John Dalberg-Acton who stated, "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely." This phrase is very true when it is applied to any one human being. It does not apply to an all loving, benevolent God whose nature has positively no shadow of darkness and is 100% loving, full of grace, mercy, righteousness and who is just, faithful and true.

Again, unfortunately, the negative role models of a sovereign ruler, whether we realize it or not, have affected our view of Yahweh's attribute of being sovereign over our lives as well as the events of this world. In many ways we are still under the influence of the greatest deception that was first instilled within man through Adam and Eve back in the Garden. As we read the account found in Genesis 3, we see that the devil, in the guise of a serpent, placed the seed of distrust towards God into Adam and Eve. He placed the false seed that God was not all that He said He was and that God had held back from them and that ultimately, God had lied to them. Any form or inkling of distrust is in direct opposition and is a contradiction of our faith in God, His character and nature. Sometimes, again, whether we realize it or not we sometimes "slip into" times of distrust towards our God. We may not want to admit it but the fact is that it happens.

It is of interest to note that the term "sovereign" in and of itself, or any other form of the word, does not occur any time in the King James Version. Maybe the writers, who were under the "authority" of a person who thought themselves to be a sovereign king - King James, were hesitant to give use to the term "sovereign" to anyone else but the King James - we will never know but it was just a thought. The New

International Version (NIV) uses the term "sovereign" 294 times, all of which are used as an adjective describing Yahweh (referred to as "Sovereign LORD"), and describing Jesus as "... our only Sovereign and Lord," as found in Jude 1:4.

Some of the key verses found in the scriptures that refer to this attribute of "sovereignty" concerning our God are found as follows:

Psalms 115:3 - *"But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased."*

Isaiah 46:10 - *"Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, 'My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure'..."*

Daniel 4:35 - *"All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, But He does according to His will in the host of heaven And among the inhabitants of earth; And no one can ward off His hand Or say to Him, 'What have You done?'"*

Job 9:12 - *"Were He to snatch away, who could restrain Him? Who could say to Him, 'What are You doing?'"*

1 Timothy 6:15 - *"Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate (sovereign), the King of kings, and Lord of lords;"*

Revelation 4:8 - *"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come."*

Revelation 4:20 - *"Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created."*

... and there are many more.

However the scripture verse I would like for us to also look at is one that is found in Isaiah 55: 8-11 - *"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. 9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. 10 For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: 11 So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."*

These scriptures are used by many of us primarily in times of prayer, which in essence, they seem to be perfect to use within the scope of prayer. However, I believe these scriptures reveal a greater understanding and illumination of the sovereignty of Yahweh, God than that of just for the use of "backing us up in our prayers." Over my years of being in ministry and over my years of just being within the Body of Christ, I have seen and heard these scriptures, as well as others, used by well meaning believers, as a way of putting a "power demand on God." I have heard these and other scriptures used to supposedly show us that God is now somehow "obligated" to do what we ask Him to as long as we use the correct scriptures. I have heard these and other scriptures become part of the inordinate "name it and claim it" hyper-faith message. Now before you go throwing stones at me or hitting the delete button, please, give me an opportunity to explain what I mean.

I truly believe in God's Word and His promises for us as His children. I truly believe that the only effective prayer is prayer that comes straight out of the scriptures and then prayed along with the unction of the Holy Spirit. However, I also believe that the scriptures found in Isaiah 55: 8-11 must be truly understood within its true context of revealing the sovereignty of God. The most important part of the scriptures found in Isaiah 55:8-11 is found in verse 11 concerning when we speak His Word in prayer or just in our lives in general - *"So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."*

Do you see what God is truly telling us here? God is saying that **His Word** will accomplish what **He wants it to do**. It does not say anything about His Word accomplishing what we think it should do. Unfortunately, when we pray, we have a tendency to pray and think that what we are praying should come about as we think it should be or what we think it should look like or turn out to be. We forget the scriptures prior which explicitly tell us that His ways and thoughts are not our ways and thoughts. It explicitly tells us that His ways and thoughts are on a much higher level than our earthly concepts of the way things should be.

We must remember that our God, *"Declares the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, 'My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure'..."* (Isaiah 46:10). We forget or neglect to believe in or accept the sovereignty of a Holy, Righteous, Just and Faithful God whose ways, thoughts and concepts are so vastly superior to our own. You may say, that He has given us His Holy Spirit so that we can now know His mind. (1Corinthians 2:11-14) This is very true. We may be able to know His mind and ways but are we ready to come into agreement with those ways when they may not line up with our concept of what He should be thinking? Yes, we have His Holy Spirit but no we are not **the** Sovereign God!!! There is only **one** Sovereign God and none of us are it!!!

Recognizing that God is our Sovereign God must be the true attitude of our heart. It is a heart that recognizes themselves as being "poor in spirit" and recognizing their need for a God who is so much greater in every way than I. It is an attitude of heart that does not think that God is "obligated" to do anything for us. The fact of the matter is that He already has done it all for us by giving us salvation through the blood of Jesus. It is we who owe a great debt of gratitude to Him. It is we who should, out of love for Him, feel an "obligation" to now love, obey and walk in His ways because He first loved us and has already given us so much. When we say things like "we must make a power demand on God," we are saying that now we are in control and God must perform (like a genie in bottle) His mighty power for our purposes because He is obligated to do this for us. How dare we think like that!!!

When we forget or neglect to walk in the understanding that God is the one and only Sovereign God, we can very easily slip into subliminally thinking that we are in charge and that we all of a sudden become the sovereign ruler on this earth instead of God. We begin to think that we know what is best and we ultimately begin thinking that we can tell God what He can and cannot do. We begin to think that He must change His ways of thinking. He must now change His plans for how His Kingdom should be run or how His Kingdom should come so that it now lines up with what we think. To that I say again, "How dare we!!!" God is God and we are not!!!

Unfortunately, we as believers, over these past 40-50 years, slowly but surely have lost our awe and fear of our God. We have diluted His awesome power and authority (His sovereignty) with our "new revelations" from well meaning leaders. We have diluted His holiness and His just ways with the inordinate hyper-grace message. We have "de-deified" the Most High, El Elyon, Sovereign God. We have made Him, as my good friend Jim says, after our own image and likeness. We have made our God exactly what we want Him to be for us instead of we becoming more and more like Him, desiring to bless His heart with no hidden agenda for anything of self. We pray, "Let your Kingdom come and let your will be done" but are we praying that with the thinking that His Kingdom will come and His will must be done in the way we think it should happen.

Unwittingly, getting into this mentality, we have hurt the Body of Christ more than we realize. I have personally seen young believers, as well as some older ones, who have walked away from their faith because they were told that if they make these "power demands" on God and use His Word for what they ask for that it will happen. When it doesn't they become disillusioned with it all. Yes, we can say that they really didn't have the faith or that they really didn't believe or that they never really had a relationship with Christ as their Lord and Savior. This may have been true. But could it also have been because they were "disciplined" and trained in a slightly skewed way of thinking that has become prevalent within the Body of Christ as we mentioned previously?

We see the authors throughout the New Testament, encouraging the believers in being steadfast in their faith and not wavering during times of hardships, trials and persecutions. The writer of Hebrews implores the Jewish believers to *"Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward."* (Hebrews 10:35) The writer of Hebrews was encouraging these Jewish believers because things weren't happening the way they thought they were supposed to happen. They were expectantly awaiting Jesus to return but He didn't. They were suffering tremendous persecution from other Jews because of their faith in Jesus' return. The Jews were telling them, that this Jesus, this so-called Messiah, has not returned after all these years. (The Book of Hebrews was written approximately 20-30 years after Jesus' death and resurrection.) The believers were starting to get weary in their faith. The writer was exhorting them to remain steadfast even though things have not happened the way they thought it was going to happen. They were encouraged to *"cast not away their confidence in the Lord"* but rather to continue to trust in the Lord, no matter what it looked like because of the ultimate reward that would come for the believers in Christ.

Throughout the New Testament and within Church history, we see that things did not happen the way the believers prayed or thought it would happen. Jesus was crucified when the disciples believed that He was the Messiah who would restore the nation of Israel and defeat the Romans. It didn't happen the way they thought. The early believers in the Book of Acts sold all their possessions because they believed Jesus would be coming back shortly after His resurrection. It didn't turn out the way they thought. Peter was praying when God told him about the coming in of the Gentiles to the faith. Peter rejected the idea. After all, Jesus was the Jewish Messiah and had nothing to do with the Gentiles. It didn't turn out the way he thought it would turn out. All the Apostles thought they were following Jesus and that they would have positions of honor and power in an earthly kingdom of Israel. It didn't turn out for them the way they thought. All of them except John were martyred for their faith. However, in all of these examples we see that those who remained steadfast and **trusted in the Sovereign God and His sovereign plan**, no matter how different or how difficult things may have looked or turned out than what they originally thought, they each received what God's ultimate plan was for them and for all who believe and trust in Him - eternal life, eternal relationship being one with the Father and with His Son, Jesus forever and ever and ever.

As we conclude our discussion, I would like to simply encourage you to continue to place your trust in the Sovereign, Most High God. In the difficult times, trust Him. When you pray and it seems as if your prayers have been answered in the direct opposite way that you had wanted, do not get discouraged. Do not get angry. Do not get condemned that you may not have prayed the right way. Do not fret that you may have "missed or forgot one of the steps to effective prayer." *"Cast not away your confidence"* in your God. Remember that there will be a great reward if you stand fast regardless of what it may look like. Yes, there is an enemy and yes He can throw a "monkey wrench" in the mix of things. However, the enemy is not sovereign. God is in total control and knows the end from the beginning. We are called to just keep speaking and declaring His Word.

Our sovereign God delights in hearing His people declare His Word with a heart that has no agenda other than desiring for His Word to accomplish what ***He sets it forth to do***. He delights in His people truly recognizing that His ways and His thoughts are on a totally different level than ours. Our God delights when we, as His children, turn towards Him and kiss towards Him as our Loving Father who just happens to be the El Elyon, the Sovereign, Most High God.

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil. It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones." Proverbs 3:5-8 (KJV)